



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

News Release

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TRASH PRODUCTION INCREASES TO YEARLY HIGH DURING HOLIDAY SEASON

Tips to Recycle Gift Wrapping, Food Packaging, and Cooking Oil

SAN DIEGO, CA— Gifts are not the only thing San Diegans will be distributing this holiday season. According to the State Integrated Waste Management Board, between Thanksgiving and the New Year an extra million tons of waste will be generated nationwide each week. In California, the average household will generate between three and 10 extra bags of garbage throughout the holidays to California landfills. However, along with this trash are materials that could be recycled such as gift wrapping, cardboard, food packaging, and cooking oil.

“The Miramar Landfill has only about eight more years of useable life left to bury trash,” said Elmer L. Heap, Jr., director of the City of San Diego’s Environmental Services Department. “By choosing to recycle, residents can help reduce large amounts of holiday waste that often end up in the trash and ultimately in the landfill. Keeping recyclables out of the trash not only conserves landfill space, but assists the City in avoiding potential State fines of \$10,000 per day for not meeting the 50 percent diversion mandate. Currently, the City diverts approximately 44 percent of waste from entering the landfill through its recycling programs, but in order to achieve 50 percent San Diegans must recycle more,” he said.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Gift Wrapping Materials

Wrapping materials such as ribbon and wrapping paper are one of the largest quantities of materials that end up in the trash during the holiday season. In fact, each year 38,000 miles of ribbon alone is thrown out nationwide, which is enough to tie a bow around the Earth! San

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Diegans can keep the holiday spirit by considering the following ideas that will help reduce, reuse and recycle materials used when wrapping packages:

- Create gift tags from last year's holiday cards or wrapping paper.
- If you use traditional gift wrapping or send holiday cards, always buy recycled-content paper that can be recycled.
- Design your own wrapping paper using paper shopping bags: decorate them with paints, crayons or art. Use blueprint paper or the Sunday comics.
- If you haven't in the past, save wrapping paper and ribbons to reuse next year.
- Drop off extra packaging materials at local private mailing centers such as Mail Boxes, Etc. Call the Plastic Loosefill Council Peanuts Hotline at 1-800-828-2214 for the names of local businesses that reuse packing peanuts.
- Recycle non-metallic wrapping paper and boxes if you do not plan to use them again.
- Ribbon made from paper can be recycled. Ribbon made from plastic or fabric is not recyclable but can be reused on other packages.
- Cardboard boxes with clear plastic windows can be recycled.

Give Gifts That Will Reduce Waste

When selecting gifts to give family and friends, consider the following ideas that will help reduce the amount of waste generated:

- Give services such as making dinner or helping with home improvements.
- Give non-material gifts such as gift certificates, making a donation to a charitable organization in their name, tickets to a sporting event, movie, or concert.
- Make home-baked goodies such as cookies, brownies or fudge and place in a reusable tin box, a kitchen container, or a decorated box.
- When selecting your gift please consider how long it will last. Often, a cheaper item will wear out long before its more durable equivalent.
- And, always remember to look for items made from recycled content.

Recycle and Reuse Holiday Food Packaging

The following items used to package food can be recycled in residents' blue curbside recycling bins or at recycling drop-off locations at City Recreation Centers:

- aluminum pie and turkey tins;
- cardboard, cracker, etc. boxes;
- glass food jars used for apple sauce, fruit juices, preserves, jellies and jams, etc;
- metal cans used for cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling, green beans, etc;
- paper egg cartons;
- plastic juice boxes;
- paper packaging and boxes;
- plastic milk and water jugs; and
- soda, cider, wine, champagne, beer and other alcohol bottles.

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The City also encourages reusing jars and pie tins to store and send home leftovers with family and friends. Vegetable wastes can be composted in your backyard compost bin.

To avoid decomposing odors and discourage insects and rodents, turkey bones and skin, or anything that can decay should also be placed in a plastic bag before disposing in the trash. If trash is not collected for several days, these materials can be bagged and frozen.

Recycle Cooking Oil or Properly Dispose of in the Trash

If residents plan on cooking with oil, the City offers a cooking oil drop-off location free of charge at the Miramar Recycling Center, located at the Miramar Landfill at 5165 Convoy Street. The Miramar Recycling Center is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Recycling Center is closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. To contact the Miramar Recycling Center, call (858) 268-8971.

Cooking oil must not be poured down drains. If you do not bring it to the Miramar Recycling Center, this material should be absorbed with paper towels, newspaper, Kitty Litter, or sawdust and then placed in a plastic bag before being discarded in the trash. Liquids of any kind are not to be disposed of in your black trash containers.

For more information on holiday waste reduction ideas, recycling, composting or trash collection, contact the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department at (858) 694-7000, or visit the department's website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/>. For information about the City's Grease Disposal Program, contact the Metropolitan Wastewater Department at (858) 292-6484, or visit <http://www.sandiego.gov/mwwd/>.

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